

Groundbreaking on Route 619 Water Project

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Ivanhoe, Virginia

September 9, 2010

I am pleased to return to Wythe County today to join with you in breaking ground on a new public water system, which when completed will provide safe and reliable public water services to 55 homes along Route 619 between Austinville and Ivanhoe.

Adequate and reliable public water systems are essential to maintaining Southwest Virginia's excellent quality of life and are critical to achieving our economic development goals for the region. For these reasons, I work actively with local governments throughout the Ninth District to secure the federal funds necessary to construct new and improve existing public water systems.

Today, we take another significant step forward in this effort as construction begins on a new, federally funded public water system for the homes along Route 619 between Austinville and Ivanhoe in Wythe County.

In 2005, the former Ivanhoe water treatment plant became inoperable. The plant was installed more than 30 years ago, and due to its age it was unable to provide water meeting the Virginia Department of Health's modern standards for water quality. The residents along Route 619 between Ivanhoe and Austinville, who relied on the Ivanhoe water treatment plant to supply their drinking water, were left to rely on wells for their water source, which can be unreliable.

To address this problem, at my urging, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, has provided a federal grant of \$1,065,000 to Wythe County for the construction of a new public water system along Route 619.

The total cost of the new water system is \$1,084,200. In addition to the federal funds, Wythe County has provided \$19,200 to construct the water system.

As part of the project, 15,450 feet of eight inch water lines will be installed along Route 619, and several fire hydrants will be installed in the area. The new water lines will provide public water service to 55 homes along Route 619 between Ivanhoe and Austinville. The water source for the new public water system is the recently completed New River Regional Water Treatment plant in Austinville.

In addition to improving the quality of life for the residents along Route 619, the new water system will establish a connection between the Austinville to Fort Chiswell public water system and the Ivanhoe to Fort Chiswell public water system. The new connection will provide an additional source of water for the Ivanhoe and Fort Chiswell water system, which currently relies on water supply wells as a water source due to the loss of the Ivanhoe water treatment plant. The new connection will ensure that residents in this area have a reliable water source—the New River Regional Water Authority treatment plant at Austinville.

In addition, the new water system will provide an additional water supply for the Old School Road water system currently being designed to serve residents in the Fort Chiswell area. The new water system will be constructed with the assistance of more than \$1 million in federal funding provided earlier this year at my urging by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency. When completed, the new water system will provide public water services to 46 homes.

Today's groundbreaking truly represents another significant step in our ongoing efforts to improve and expand access to public water service throughout Southwest Virginia. Not only will the new water system improve the quality of life by providing more reliable water services for residents along Route 619, but it will also provide an additional water source supporting public water services in the Fort Chiswell and Ivanhoe areas. The more reliable public water services provided by this project will enable future residential growth in the Ivanhoe, Austinville and Fort Chiswell communities.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize a number of individuals who have been instrumental in the success we celebrate today.

I want to thank Bucky Sharitz, Chairman of the Wythe County Board of Supervisors, and Coy McRoberts and Gary Houseman, members of the Board. The Wythe County Board of Supervisors provides excellent leadership and foresight in supporting the expansion of Wythe County's public water infrastructure.

I also want to thank the Wythe County Water and Sewer Committee, and its Chair Gene Horney, for their outstanding work to improve and expand water and wastewater services for Wythe County residents.

Cellell Dalton, Wythe County Administrator, and Ken Hurst, County Engineer, deserve our thanks today for their excellent work on behalf of Wythe County residents.

I want to thank Ellen Davis, State Director for the Rural Development Agency, and Travis Jackson, Area Director for the Rural Development Agency, as well as their excellent staff for their efforts in providing an allocation of federal funding for this project.

I also want to thank Roscoe Reynolds and Bill Carrico, who represent Wythe County in the Virginia General Assembly, for joining us today.

A number of members of the Ivanhoe and Austinville communities have worked to bring this project to construction, and I would like to offer my thanks to them at this time.

Finally, I want to thank my Project Manager, Kim McKay, for her excellent work in support of this project.

Today's groundbreaking marks a major success for Wythe County. Residents of Route 619 will benefit from the provision of more reliable water service and the enhanced opportunity for residential and economic development. For the cooperation and successful work to bring this project to construction, I want to thank all here. And I want to offer special congratulations to the residents who will soon benefit from public water services.